

Maturity Demands Courageous Conversations
What have you not confronted? (Part 7)

August 15, 2021

Text: Acts 7:42-53

Big Question: What courageous conversation do you need to have?

1. Let's Talk About The Idol Worship (An idol is anything you elevate above God)

- Acts 7:42–53 (NIV): But **God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars.** This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: “**Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?** 43 You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile’ beyond Babylon.
 - A. They **turned** away from God
 - B. They were **not faithful** to God in the wilderness (**The miracles in Egypt and provisions in the wilderness did not make them faithful**)
 - C. They were **sent to Babylon** because of their idol worship (597 B.C.)

Source: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-babylonian-exile>

Question: How can this apply to our church?

Answer: Church formats, worship styles, religious preferences, and religious personalities can easily become idols

Three Interesting Facts to Note:

1. **They were in the promise land** but were sent into exile because of **idol worship**
 2. There were only **10,000 people** sent to the exile in Babylon (597 B.C.)
 3. The **Assyrian deportation** of Israel was in 722 B.C. resulted in the complete disappearance of Israel
- Source: https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3671017/jewish/Discover-the-Four-Exiles-of-the-Jewish-People.htm

2. Let's Talk About Where They Worshiped

- 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him. 48 “However, **the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands.** As the prophet says: 49’ “ Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. **What kind of house will you build for me?** says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? 50 Has not my hand made all these things?’
 - A. God does not live in a **house** made by human hands
 - B. God’s presence is **bigger** than we can imagine (God can sit in heaven and put his foot on the earth)

3. Let's Talk About What Really Happened To Their Worship

- 51 “You **stiff-necked** people! Your hearts and ears are still **uncircumcised.** You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 **Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One.** And now you have betrayed and murdered him—53 you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”
 - A. They were **stiff-necked** (God could not get them to turn and change...v51)
 - B. They were **uncircumcised** in their hearts and ears (They ignored God) ...v51
 - C. They **resisted** God’s efforts to reach them through the Holy Spirit...v51

- D. They **persecuted** the prophets (They were violent towards spiritual leaders) ...v52
- E. They received the law but **refused** to obey it...v53

Appendix Source: “Fierce Conversation. Achieving Success At Work and At Life One Conversation at a Time By: Susan Scott

Principle 1: Master the courage to interrogate reality.

- No plan survives its collision with reality, and reality has a habit of shifting, at work and at home. Markets and economies change, requiring shifts in strategy. People change and forget to tell each other—colleagues, customers, spouses, friends. We are all changing all the time. Not only do we neglect to share this with others, we are skilled at masking it even to ourselves.

Principle 2: Come out from behind yourself into the conversation and make it real.

Principle 3: Be here, prepared to be nowhere else. (Be present)

Principle 4: Tackle your toughest challenge today.

- Burnout doesn't occur because we're solving problems; it occurs because we've been trying to solve the same problem over and over. The problem named is the problem solved. Identify and then confront the real obstacles in your path. Stay current with the people important to your success and happiness. Travel light, **agenda-free**.

Principle 5: Obey your instincts.

- Don't just trust your instincts—obey them. Your radar screen works perfectly. It's the operator who is in question. An intelligence agent is sending you messages every day, all day. Tune in. Pay attention. Share these thoughts with others. What we label as illusion is the scent of something real coming close.

Principle 6: Take responsibility for your emotional wake.

- For a leader, there is no trivial comment. Something you don't remember saying, may have had a devastating impact on someone who looked to you for guidance and approval. The conversation is not about the relationship; the conversation is the relationship. Learning to deliver the message without the load allows you to speak with clarity, conviction, and compassion.

Principle 7: Let silence do the heavy lifting.

- When there is simply a whole lot of talking going on, conversations can be so empty of meaning they crackle. Memorable conversations include breathing space. Slow down the conversation, so that insight can occur in the space between words and you can discover what the conversation really wants and needs to be about.